

POEMS  
*of the* PRAIRIE



*By*  
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# Poems of the Prairie

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I sing you the songs of the Prairie,  
My gift to the land that I own.  
And though they be rough-hewn and homely  
They are songs of a land I have known.  
I have basked in the suns of her summers,  
I have breasted her blizzards and cold,  
I have travelled her highways and byways,  
I have gathered her harvests of gold.  
And so in my songs of the Prairie  
Are pictured her moods and her charms.  
May this tribute of mine woo the Fairy  
Who will lead me at last to her arms.

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## THE HERITAGE

---

I sing of a land of breezes soft  
That come with the kiss of spring;  
When the crocus pushes its head aloft  
And the meadow-lark's a-wing.

I sing of a land of smiling skies,  
That gleam with the summer sun.  
When the twilight of evening never dies  
Ere a new day has begun.

I sing of a land of mellow moons  
That brood over fields of gold,  
When Nature gives of herself, and croons  
The song that is ages old.

I sing of the land of frost and cold  
That bites like a wolf at bay,  
When the North wind grips with a strangle hold  
And the Blizzard King holds sway.

I sing the praise of the Prairie land,  
With its leagues of waving grain;  
'Tis not a mythical fairy-land,  
But a land where brawn and brain

May reap the fruit of its labor,  
And gather the priceless spoil;  
Where envy is not your neighbor,  
Your heritage is the soil.

## THE PRAIRIE

---

It stretches in billowy miles away,  
    Arched by a sky clear blue.  
This wonderful land, this Prairie land,  
    Kissed by the sun and dew.

Out of the past when Red Men roamed  
    Over its bosom wide;  
When the buffalo followed their beaten paths  
    Clear to the Great Divide.

A myriad homesteads dot the ground,  
    Where acres of wheat are grown;  
And every year there are thousands more  
    Calling this land their own.

The Red Man has gone from his haunts of yore,  
    No longer the buffalo roams;  
And the land that was once a no-man's land  
    Is covered with happy homes.

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## RETROSPECTION

---

Around the cabin howls the winter blizzard,  
    The swirling snow blots out the moon and stars;  
'Twould seem the very elements are striving,  
    Striving like some wild beast to break its bars.

Upon my hearth a cheerful fire is blazing,  
    I sit alone and hear the blizzard roar;  
From out the shadows as I sit there gazing  
    I see old faces that I knew of yore.

In memory's dim corridor I see them,  
    The boys and girls I knew in days gone by,  
And down the distant years I hear their voices,  
    The happy laughter and the tearful sigh.

Where are they now, those forms I see in mem'ry?  
    In other lands some are, and some are dead!  
I fain would have them linger with me longer,  
    But it is late and I must go to bed.

THE PIONEER

---

Over the weary leagues of prairie,  
With eyes to the setting sun,  
They marched like a silent army  
Steadily onward, one by one.

Bravely they faced her snow-bound winters,  
Their hearts would not own defeat.  
They nestled close to her bosom,  
And she paid them in Golden Wheat.

They came in the mist of the morning  
Over the ox-cart trail.  
Fording the streams and rivers,  
Ploughing the slough and swail.

\* \* \*

He stands on the trail at twilight,  
The sturdy old pioneer,  
And four decades have passed him  
And 'tis springtime in the year.

And he sighs as he notes the changes  
That over the land have come,  
For the sight of his eyes confounds him  
Like the sound of a warning drum.

The old ox-trail is a highway,  
Where high-powered autos roar.  
The Prairie billows with miles of wheat  
Where the Red Man roamed of yore.

The all-steel cars of a fast express  
Go thundering down the rails,  
And the old man stands and gazes,  
And thinks of the ancient trails.

The lights of the town are twinkling.  
The moonbeams spread their light.  
And high in the air a giant plane  
Is zooming through the night.

## THE HOMESTEADER

---

He came all the way from London town,  
To farm in the Golden West,  
He never before had reaped or sown,  
Folks said he was just a pest.

They said that if he should happen to die,  
And get off at the left-hand turn,  
That Satan would have to let him dry,  
As he was too green to burn.

Now "Greenhorn Brown" from London tow'  
Didn't die, at least not then;  
He took up a homestead and settled down  
In a land where men are men.

He started to learn the farming game  
Painfully, bit by bit.  
He made no bids for fulsome fame,  
And he won by strength and grit.

He still lives down where the river flows  
On its way where his fields slope down.  
He is well off now, and he reaps and sows,  
This fellow from London town.



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SPRING

---

There's a soft breeze out of the South.  
There's a haze in the twilight sky.  
The breath of buds just bursting  
Is wafted gently by.

There's a song of birds in the groves,  
The honk of geese in the air;  
The cattle graze on the new grass  
And Spring is everywhere.

There's a rush to the task at hand,  
Sowing the seed afar,  
Like men that muster for battle,  
But this battle leaves no scar.

There's a drone on the wind from the South  
'Tis nature's symphony;  
The birds and bees are busy  
In flower and bush and tree.

'Tis Spring all over the land,  
And Spring in the hearts of men;  
For the hope that springs eternal  
Is bubbling up again.



SUMMER

---

There's a riot of song from the groves,  
A drone of bees on the air;  
For birds and bees are busy,  
Each with his own affair.

There's a wealth of bloom all around,  
Columbine, lily and rose;  
Heavy the breath of the flowers  
Comes at the evening's close.

Heat waves are glimmering clear  
Over the gleaming plain.  
Waterless lakes they seem,  
Mocking the thirsty grain.

The cattle are seeking the shade,  
Mild-eyed, contented they graze;  
Constantly swishing the flies  
That come with the summer days.

The fields hold a promise of plenty,  
For the wheat is beginning to fill;  
The Harvest Queen will be coming  
To lay her gold crown on the hill.

Skyward the farmers gaze,  
Watching for signs of rain;  
They are truly "showers of blessing,"  
In a land where the life is grain.





AUTUMN

---

Over the leagues of prairie  
    There hangs an autumn haze.  
It stretches to wide horizons  
    As far as the eye can gaze.

It hangs over hill and valley,  
    It broods over farmsteads fair;  
And a promise of fulfillment  
    Breathes in the autumn air.

The day is alive with a humming.  
    The night is ablaze with fires,  
For it is the time of harvest,  
    The harvest of men's desires.

The forests are robbed of their blossom,  
    The fields are robbed of their grain,  
And soon where man has garnered,  
    The winter king will reign.

But with each succeeding harvest  
    The promise is revealed:  
That as long as man is faithful  
    The earth shall yield—shall yield.



## THE HARVEST

---

As far as the eye can carry,  
The smokes from the threshers rise,  
And a thousand spouts are pouring  
The coveted Golden Prize.

Like rivers that find the ocean,  
The stream of wheat rolls on,  
Till the last long train is loaded,  
The last train load has gone.

Then will the frost of winter  
Lock up this land once more,  
And where the wheat fields billowed  
The winter storms will roar.

The days of winter over,  
The breath of spring blows mild,  
And once more Nature's blessing  
Will fall upon her child.

Once more the seed is scattered  
Through all the Prairie-land;  
But what the harvest time shall bring,  
Fate holdeth in her hand.



APPROACH OF WINTER

---

Harvest days are over,  
Nights are growing cold,  
There's a threat of winter  
As the year grows old.

Leaves are gently falling,  
Birds have ceased their song,  
Only crows are calling,  
Hurrying along.

Squirrels are hoarding grubstakes,  
Rabbits turning white,  
Wild geese loudly honking  
Overhead all night.

Bright and clear the sunshine  
Gilds the hills and plain,  
Stars at night are steely,  
Moon is on the wane.

Far to northward, gleaming  
Northern lights appear;  
Everything is telling  
That winter time is near.



## THE BLIZZARD

---

Have you traveled the trails on a winter's night  
When the frost like steel whips stung?  
When the very air you breathed would bite  
Till it warmed up in your lung?

When the steel-shod sleighs would grip the snow  
And send out a music weird?  
On a night like this if the wind blows high  
It is something to be feared.

On a night like this when a blizzard blows  
And the snow rides on the blast.  
The ice-balls hit like javelin throws  
Or darts by some giant cast.

The air is a swirl, a maddening whirl  
Of snow that is cruel as Death,  
And over the land like a stark black hand  
Is a grip that takes your breath.

The grip is the grip of the Blizzard King.  
And none may dispute his sway.  
He rides abroad like a maddened god  
To smite as he goes his way.



## CHRISTMAS

The frost is glistening on the snow,  
The stars are bright, the moon is clear;  
The homestead lights are all aglow,  
For Christmas time again is near.

In town and village shops are gay,  
The festive spirit is abroad; ,  
Tomorrow will be Christmas Day  
In stately home and shack of sod.

In all these homes are tiny ears  
That hear again the story through,  
The story that for years and years  
Has made the children's dream come true.

In all these homes are little eyes  
That sparkle bright on Christmas morn;  
And Happiness and Joy arise  
To greet the day when Christ was born.

The stars are bright, the moon is clear,  
The bells are pealing far and wide;  
The Christmas spirit of good cheer  
Goes rolling onward like a tide.

Through all the land it surges on  
Through storm and snow and bitter cold,  
And every gift it breathes upon  
It turns with love to purest gold.



## THE OPEN ROAD

---

I have followed the long white ribbon  
Over many a weary mile.  
I have seen the storm clouds frowning,  
I have seen the sunshine smile.

I have been where no human footstep  
Has left a print to guide;  
Where no human habitation  
Has been since Adam died.

I have lived the life of a gypsy,  
Roaming and roughing it hard,  
Alone with my thoughts and fancies,  
With none I could call a pard.

I have seen the mountains tower  
Till they seem to reach the sky,  
Where the trees stand stately and somber  
And nod as the years go by.

I have followed the long white ribbon  
Where it led through leagues of plain  
Ablaze in an autumn glory,  
Covered with waving grain.

The wealth of the wide, wide prairie  
Is here at man's behest,  
And O, how he works to get it,  
And labors and does not rest.

The league-long gleam of wheat-fields  
Is something to behold;  
It speaks of a new fulfillment  
Of a promise ages old.

It tells of a bitter struggle,  
It tells of an anxious dread,  
But it also tells of hope renewed  
And a promise of daily bread.

And this is the song of the Prairie,  
And he who will learn it may:  
If you stay by me, your friend I'll be,  
Serve me and I'll repay.

---

I AM TRAVELLING BACK TO YOU

---

Where my weary feet have travelled  
It would take me long to tell:  
Over endless leagues of prairie,  
Over paths remembered well.

Over mountains, over valleys,  
Over rivers deep and wide.  
And in all my restless roaming  
There was nowhere to abide.

I have tented by the roadside  
With the pale stars overhead,  
And the wolf-cry in the night wind,  
As I lay upon my bed.

As I lay me down to slumber  
In the tent beside the trail,  
In my dreams I seemed to see you  
Far off—as beyond a veil.

Seemed to see the dear, dear faces,  
Seemed to hear the voices sweet,  
Far away beyond the mountains,  
And the sound of patt'ring feet.

In my dreams I seemed to see you  
And I'll make my dream come true,  
For tomorrow I'll be travelling—  
Travelling back to home—and you.



LONELINESS

---

She stood alone on the city street  
When the world passed by at night,  
And out of the throng that swept along  
Not one she knew by sight.  
As she scanned each face, she could find no trace  
Of recognition there.  
They passed her by, nor turned an eye,  
Each bent on his own affair.  
As she stood alone, and all unknown,  
Stemming the human tide,  
She might have been hurled far out on a world  
Where everyone else had died.

He stood alone in the forest dim  
When the night was closing down,  
When out of the dark that was black and stark  
Came sounds that were all her own.  
The swaying trees, like organ keys,  
Made music wild and weird.  
The eerie owl and the fearsome howl  
Of the wolf with eyes that leered,  
And compassed round with the forest sound,  
Where none but himself could hear,  
Midst the forest wild he was still its child  
And lonely, he did not fear.

She stands alone by her cabin door  
Where the Prairie stretches away.  
From a city life to a settler's wife  
She came, and every day,  
Shading her eyes with her hand, she tries  
Some sign of life to see.  
But never a soul is there where roll  
The miles of monotony.  
Her mate is away at work for her,  
She watches while he is gone.  
A tragic figure, the settler's wife  
By her cabin, alone! alone!



## THE CYCLONE

---

'Twas a stifling day; the sun beat down  
From a sky like polished brass.  
The mercury stood at a hundred and ten,  
And the heat burned up the grass.

The birds had hidden themselves away,  
The cattle were deep in the shade;  
An ominous stillness spread its wings  
As over a world new made.

Then out of the west a Form arose,  
Funnel-shaped, towering high.  
And they who were working dropped their work,  
And the light went out of the sky!

Onward it swept with deaf'ning roar,  
This terrible unleashed Power;  
Like a host of destroying angels it passed  
In that dark fateful hour.

Where homes had been short hours before,  
Stark desolation reigned;  
The forest fell as grass might fall,  
Till not a tree remained.

As a plowshare cleaves an anthill clean,  
It furrowed a path of death.  
The earth was bare, and the dead were there,  
In the wake of its awful breath.



AN APPRECIATION

---

You may sing of your mountains wild and steep  
Of your canyons deep and wide,  
Where the rivers rush with headlong leap  
To be lost in the ebbing tide.  
But give me the Prairie for my home,  
With its leagues of waving grain,  
And neither the mountains nor ocean's foam  
Can lure me back again.

You may sing of your snow-capped peaks cloud-wreathed  
That pierce the azure sky;  
A more beneficent spirit breathed  
Where the golden Prairies lie.  
For there is the promise of reward  
To all who toil and sow,  
But life in the mountains for man is hard  
As all who dwell there know.

The Prairie land is a bounteous land  
For all the sons of toil.  
For Nature scatters with lavish hand  
And gives to man the spoil.  
Her riches rare she freely gives  
To those who seek her fair,  
And happy is he who'er he be  
Whose home is established there.

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THE CALL

---

The mountains are towering behind me,  
In front is the shimmering sea;  
As I stand on the shore, I can hear it once more,  
A call that I know is for me.

'Tis the call of the great open spaces,  
Where skies up above you are blue;  
'Tis a land once you've known you will claim as your own,  
And you know it will always be true.

'Tis a land where your toil is rewarded,  
Where Nature her blessing bestows,  
Where the fields are agleam with the wheat; 'tis a dream  
That only the Prairie man knows.

There is space for the mind on the Prairie,  
Its distances beckon you all;  
It calls as I stand by the shimmering strand,  
It calls, and I'll answer its call.



